

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BRASIL 02755 071725Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 EB-08 IO-13 ACDA-07 CU-02 BIB-01
/089 W

-----080558Z 104985 /17

R 071620Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0971
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

S E C R E T BRASILIA 2755

EO 11652 XGDS-4
TAGS SHUM BR
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON JORNAL DO
BRASIL, BUT OPINIAO MAY SOON CEASE PUBLICATION

REF: A. BRASILIA 1999 B. BRASILIA 2737

1. SUMMARY. THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE ON
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, MEETING IN COLUMBIA LAST WEEK, DECLARED
FREEDOM OF PRESS NONEXISTENT IN BRAZIL, AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES,
BUT WELCOMED TELEGRAM FROM JORNAL DO BRASIL DIRECTOR ANNOUNCING
SUDDEN SUSPENSION BY GOB OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES AGAINST PAPER.
THAT POSITIVE STEP MAY SOON BE OFFSET, HOWEVER, SINCE MAGAZINE
OPINIAO IN LAST WEEK'S ISSUE DEFIANTLY ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL
CEASE PUBLICATION IF NECESSARY RATHER THAN SUBMIT FURTHER TO
PRE-CENSORSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE BROUGHT A STEP FORWARD AND A POTENTIAL
STEP BACKWARD FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN BRAZIL. THE COUNTRY
CAME IN FOR ATTENTION FROM THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS SOCIETY'S
COMMITTEE ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AT ITS BIENNIAL MEETING HELD
MARCH 28-31 IN CARTAGENA. THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATE, FERNANDO

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BRASIL 02755 071725Z

GASPARIAN, WHO IS ALSO DIRECTOR OF THE CENSORED WEEKLY MAGAZINE
OPINIAO, DENOUNCED THE EXISTENCE IN BRAZIL OF SELECTIVE PRE-
CENSORSHIP WHICH INTIMIDATES THE ENTIRE PRESS, AND OF THE EXERCISE
BY THE GOB OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES AGAINST CERTAIN PAPERS, BY
WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENT AND RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORT
OF VITAL EQUIPMENT. GASPARIAN SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO JORNAL DO
BRASIL AS ONE VICTIM. (EMBASSY IS AWARE THROUGH CONVERSATIONS WITH

JORNAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT NASCIMENTO BRITO, THAT GOB RECENTLY IMPOSED BAN ON PLACEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT WITH PAPER BY GOVERNMENT ORGANS AND MIXED ENTERPRISES, AND HAS BEEN STALLING ON IMPORT PERMITS FOR PRINTING EQUIPMENT). (REF A).

3. ONE DAY FOLLOWING GASPARIAN'S COMMENTS, MEETING RECEIVED TELEGRAM FROM NASCIMENTO BRITO, ANNOUNCING RECEIPT OF NOTIFICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD LIFTED ITS ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF JORNAL. VARIOUS DELEGATES (EDITORS AND DIRECTORS OF MAJOR PUBLICATIONS IN HEMISPHERE), WELCOMED THE NEWS AS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS PRESS FREEDOM IN BRAZIL, WITH A COUPLE COMMENTING FAVORABLY ON GOB'S "SENSITIVITY."

4. NONETHELESS, AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING, BRAZIL WAS AMONG THE MAJORITY OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE COUNTRIES IN WHICH FREEDOM OF PRESS WAS FOUND TO BE NONEXISTENT. GROUP'S SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO BRAZIL WERE THAT "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DOES NOT EXIST; EIGHT PUBLICATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO PRIOR CENSORSHIP; PUBLICATIONS CANNOT APPLY TO THE COURTS TO SEEK THE SUSPENSION OF CENSORSHIP; CRITICISMS OF THE REGIME HAVE PROVOKED DISCRIMINATION; THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROHIBITED PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAS CONFISCATED EDITIONS OF SOME PUBLICATIONS FOR HAVING CARRIED SUCH NEWS."

5. PRESS FREEDOM MAY SHORTLY TAKE A STEP BACKWARD INVOLVING GASPARIAN'S WEEKLY MAGAZINE OF COMMENTARY, OPINIAO, WHICH WENT TO STANDS LAST WEEK WITH EDITORIAL NOT SUBMITTED TO CENSORS, IN WHICH DIRECTORS ANNOUNCED "TEMPORARY" CLOSING OF MAGAZINE, IN PROTEST AGAINST THE "TRIMMING" OF THE RIGHT OF THOUGHT AND OPINION, AND DECLARED THAT OPINIAO WILL NOT CIRCULATE AGAIN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BRASIL 02755 071725Z

UNTIL FREED FROM PRIOR CENSORSHIP. SAME ISSUE CONTAINED ARTICLE AND SPEECH BY MDB RADICAL SENATOR PAULO BROSSARD, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN PRESENTED TO CENSORS. AT SAME TIME, IT WAS REPORTED THAT DIRECTORS HAD DECIDED TO PUBLISH COMING WEEK'S ISSUE IN ITS ENTIRETY WITHOUT PRESENTATION TO CENSORS.

6. IN MEETING PREVIOUS WEEK WITH AMCONSUL RIO, GASPARIAN HAD ADVISED OF THE IMPENDING ANNOUNCEMENT, AND EXPLAINED THAT HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES HAD CONCLUDED THEY COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE PRIOR CENSORSHIP, WHICH HAD RESULTED IN LOSS OF CREDIBILITY AND READER INTEREST, CAUSING CIRCULATION TO DECLINE TO POINT WHERE MAGAZINE WAS OPERATING AT A LOSS. GASPARIAN'S ASSUMPTION IS THAT AUTHORITIES WILL NOT PERMIT OPINIAO TO CIRCULATE UNCENSORED.

7. INTERESTING SIDELIGHT IS THAT MEETING AROSE WHEN GASPARIAN PHONED CONSUL ON MORNING OF MARCH 25 TO INFORM THAT CENSORS IN BRASILIA HAD BANNED MAGAZINE'S PUBLICATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S UN SPEECH, AND TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN A MEETING TO DISCUSS MATTER. WHEN GASPARIAN ARRIVED LATE THAT AFTERNOON, HE INFORMED CONSUL

THAT HE HAD JUST HEARD FROM CENSORS THAT DECISION HAD BEEN REVERSED
--THE FIRST SUCH REVERSAL IN MAGAZINE'S HISTORY. ASPARIAN SPECULATED
THAT HIS CONVERSATIONS ON THE SUBJECT WITH VARIOUS PEOPLE,
INCLUDING CONSUL, MAY HAVE COME TO ATTENTION OF AUTHORITIES
THROUGH HIS TAPPED TELEPHONE AND RESULTED IN OFFICIAL CHANGE OF HEART.

8. COMMENT. WE FIND OURSELVES IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH PRESS SOCIETY'S

SPECIFIC FINDINGS, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT BELIEVE THEY ADD UP TO
TOTAL ABSENCE OF FREEDOM FOR THE WRITTEN PRESS. FACT REMAINS THAT
BULK OF BRAZILIAN PRESS IS NOT UNDER PRE-CENSORSHIP, AND MAJOR
PAPERS HAVE NOT CEASED TO CARRY ON ACTIVE AND OFTEN CRITICAL
REPORTING AND COMMENT ON DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ISSUES, INCLUDING
HUMAN RIGHTS. CASE IN POINT IS SERIES OF SHARP CRITICISMS LEVELED
BY MOST MAJOR DAILIES AGAINST PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO RECESS CONGRESS
AND DECREE NEW POLITICAL GROUND RULES (REF B). HOWEVER, THE REAL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BRASIL 02755 071725Z

OR POTENTIAL THREAT OF GOVERNMENT REPRISALS AGAINST THOSE -ABUSING"
THE LATITUDE OFFERED BY SELF-CENSORSHIP NO DOUBT TAKES A CERTAIN
TOLL. INDEED, NASCIMENTO BRITO OF JORNAL INFORMED US RECENTLY THAT
WHILE PAPER WOULD NOT BACK DOWN FROM ITS BASICALLY CRITICAL STANCE
IN THE FACE OF GOB ECONOMIC PRESSURES, IT WOULD SOFTEN ITS TONE
AND SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO PRINT SOME "GOOD NEWS" FOR A CHANGE. OUR
IMPRESSION IS THAT JORNAL'S RECENT EDITORIALS REFLECT THIS DECISION:
THEIR BASICALLY CRITICAL THRUST IS NOW SOMETIMES PARTLY OBSCURED
BY VAGUE RHETORIC AND ATTEMPTS AT EVEN-HANDED TREATMENT OF ISSUES
WHICH RESULTS IN A CONFUSED COUNTERPOINT. THIS CHANGE, BY PARTLY
MEETING GOB'S OBJECTIVES, MAY HAVE PLAYED LARGE PART IN GOVERN-
MENT'S DECISION TO LET UP ON JORNAL IN THE FACE OF FOREIGN
CRITICISM. OTHER MAJOR FACTOR WAS PROBABLY GOB'S DESIRE TO DO
WHAT IT FEELS IT CAN TO AVOID IMAGE PROBLEMS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
WHILE NUCLEAR ACCORD REMAINS A LIVE INTERNATIONAL ISSUE.
EVEN SO, LIMITED FREEDOM NOW ENJOYED BY MUCH OF PRESS REMAINS
SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT WHIM. THERE ARE INCREASING REPORTS THAT
GOVERNMENT'S IMPENDING POLITICAL "REFORMS" DESIGNED TO LIMIT
GROWTH AND INFLUENCE OF THE OPPOSITION WILL ALSO ULTIMATELY
INCLUDE TOUGHER NEW PRESS LAWS, POSSIBLY SETTING UP SYSTEM OF
FINES FOR OFFENDING PUBLICATIONS.
CRIMMINS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, CENSORSHIP, CLOSURE OF OFFICES, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BRASIL02755
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770122-0852
Format: TEL
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770479/aaaacqts.tel
Line Count: 161
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 08d1c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BRASILIA 1999
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2872331
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOVERNMENT SUSPENDS ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON JORNAL DO BRASIL, BUT OPINIAO MAY SOON CEASE PUBLICATION
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, BR, JORNAL DO BRASIL, OPINIAO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/08d1c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009